

Amendments to the Specification:

Kindly amend the Specification as follows:

Kindly amend the paragraph starting at page 9, line 15, as follows:

According to one embodiment of the present invention, the shaft 12 also defines at least one steering cable for steering at least a portion of the shaft 12. In one embodiment, the entire length of the shaft 12 is steerable, while according to other embodiments, only a portion of the shaft 12, such as a portion adjacent to the distal end 12a of the shaft 12, is steerable. In the example embodiment shown, the shaft 12 includes a first steering cable 34 and a second steering cable 36. The first steering cable 34 is configured to steer the shaft 12 in first and second directions that are 180 degrees apart relative to each other, e.g., north-south, while the second steering cable 36 is configured to steer the shaft 12 in third and fourth directions that are 180 degrees apart relative to each other and that are 90 degrees apart relative to the first and second directions, e.g., east-west. It should be understood that reference herein to north, south, east and west is made to a relative coordinate system. Advantageously, each of the first steering cable 34 and the second steering cable 36 extends from the distal end 12a of the shaft 12, or from a location near to the distal end 12a of the shaft 12, to the proximal end 12b of the shaft 12. It should be understood, however, that while a single steering cable is shown and described herein for steering the shaft 12 in each of the above-mentioned directions, other embodiments of the present invention may employ more than one steering cable for these purposes, as is described below. The steering cables may be arranged and configured as described, for example, in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/510,923, entitled "A Carriage Assembly for Controlling a Steering Wire Mechanism Within a Flexible Shaft," now issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,517,565, which is expressly incorporated herein in its entirety by reference thereto.

Kindly amend the paragraph starting at page 16, line 12, as follows:

Referring to Figure 5, an output shaft 86 of a motor 84 engages a connector 63 of the coupling 56 of the power transfer cable 48 when the coupling 56 is engaged with the power module 50 to thereby drive the first steering cable 34. It should be understood that, while only a single steering cable 34 is shown and described for steering the shaft 12 in the north-south direction, the present invention may employ, in accordance with an alternative embodiment of the invention, a pair of

steering cables via a pulley arrangement for this purpose. In addition, an output shaft 92 of a motor 90 engages the connector 66 of the coupling 56 when the coupling 56 is engaged with the power module 50 to thereby drive the second steering cable 36. Again, it should be understood that, while only a single steering cable 36 is shown and described for steering the shaft 12 in the east-west direction, the present invention may employ, in accordance with an alternative embodiment of the invention, a pair of steering cables via a pulley arrangement for this purpose. The motors 84, 90 may be secured on a carriage 100, which is selectively movable via an output shaft 98 of a motor 96 between a first position and a second position to selectively engage and disengage the motors 84, 90 to thereby permit the shaft 12 to become taut and steerable or limp as necessary. It should be appreciated that other mechanical, electrical or electro-mechanical mechanisms may be used to selectively engage and disengage the steering mechanism. The motors may be arranged and configured as described, for example, in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/510,923, entitled "A Carriage Assembly for Controlling a Steering Wire Mechanism Within a Flexible Shaft," now issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,517,565, which is expressly incorporated herein in its entirety by reference thereto.

Kindly amend the paragraph starting at page 19, line 17, as follows:

According to one embodiment of the present invention, one or more of the shaft 12, the control module 14 and the power module 50 may include a memory unit, such as memory unit 174 illustrated schematically in Figure 7. The memory unit 174 may store information as described, for example, in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/723,715, filed on November 28, 2000, now issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,793,652, U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/836,781, filed on April 17, 2001, U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/887,789, filed on June 22, 2001, and U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/099,634, filed on March 15, 2002 each of which is expressly incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. For instance, as illustrated in Figure 7, the memory unit 174 may include a data connector 272 that includes contacts 276, each electrically and logically connected to memory unit 174 via a respective line 278. Memory unit 174 is configured to store, for example, a serial number data 180, an attachment type identifier (ID) data 182 and a usage data 184. Memory unit 174 may additionally store other data. Both the serial number data 180 and the ID data 182 may be configured as read-only data. In the example embodiment, serial number data 180 is data uniquely identifying the particular component, whereas the ID data 182 is data identifying the type of the component,

such as, for example, a shaft. The usage data 184 represents usage of the particular component, such as, for example, the number of times the shaft 12 has been employed or the number of times that the light source 26 has been activated. It should be appreciated that the shaft 12 may be designed and configured to be used a single time or, in such embodiments wherein the shaft 12 is sterilizable or autoclavable, multiple times. The control module 14 and/or the power module 50 may also be designed and configured to be used a predetermined number of times. Accordingly, the usage data 184 may be used to determine whether the shaft 12 has been used and/or whether the number of uses has exceeded the maximum number of permitted uses. According to one embodiment, an attempt to use the shaft 12 (or the control module 14 and the power module 50) after the maximum number of permitted uses has been reached may generate an ERROR condition.